

Canada's healthcare solutions magazine

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Electronic stethoscope with Bluetooth wireless capability introduced to Canada >22

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Medical education in Canada – a prescription for change

2010 marks the hundred-year anniversary of the Flexner Report – a study of medical education in Canada and the United States. Since that time, there have been countless changes in medical practice, Canada's healthcare system and population, and the availability of medical and pedagogical technologies. Yet there has been no comprehensive study of the Canadian system of medical education in 100 years – until now.

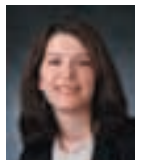
The Association of Faculties of Medicine recently released a report titled: *The Future of Medical Education in Canada (FMEC): A Collective Vision for MD Education*. The report is the culmination of a 30-month project funded by Health Canada which examines medical education in the country.

Ten evidence-based priority areas for change emerged from this report. The 10 recommendations are as follows:

1. Address Individual and Community Needs
2. Enhance Admissions Processes
3. Build on the Scientific Basis of Medicine
4. Promote Prevention and Public Health
5. Address the Hidden Curriculum
6. Diversify Learning Contexts
7. Value Generalism
8. Advance Inter- and Intra-Professional Practice
9. Adopt a Competency-Based and Flexible Approach
10. Foster Medical Leadership

Implementing the recommendations will significantly enhance Canadian MD education, optimize health care delivery, and ultimately improve the health status of all Canadians.

The physician's educational continuum is lifelong, starting prior to medical school admission and extending through MD education, residency and fellowship training programs, and into practice (continuing medical education). This systematic review of MD education was just the first step in creating a collective vision for the future of medical education in Canada. The next will be an in-depth review of postgraduate medical training in Canada and, finally, a review of continuing medical education.



Morena Zanotto
Editor

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Maximizing employee potential: Data-driven tool shows the way

by David S. Lahey

One of the most important decisions any organization can make is hiring the right people to help run it. With so much at stake it's a wonder many employers, including those in healthcare, still rely so heavily on the traditional job interview to determine who to bring on board. The trouble with using this one single method is that it's an inherently unscientific and subjective approach, laden with possibilities for error. Increasingly, smart organizations are moving beyond traditional hiring methods by incorporating more reliable, data-driven tools in their recruitment practices, tools such as personality assessments. This type of tool can also be used to help maximize the contribution of existing employees.

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) is a state-of-the-art acute care teaching hospital serving people living in Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario. It's been using the Predictive Index (PI) personality assessment tool, available in Canada for three years through Predictive Success Corporation, for hiring, team-building and career development.

Don Halpert, chief human resources officer for TBRHSC, had used PI at a previous healthcare employer and was quick to introduce it to his current organization. "We were having some challenges with our selection process for managers and wanted to improve our ability to ensure job fit," says Halpert. "I knew from experience that PI draws out information about a candidate's personality and likely job performance that you just can't get through an interview; even through the rigorous committee-based interview approach that we use." Halpert also points out the value of the test results in terms of focusing the interview. "The candidate and the search committee members get a copy of the test results prior to the interview and it's a great discussion starter," he says. "We can hone in on areas that need to be explored and the candidate is usually very interested in the results and welcomes further discussion."

The need for TBRHSC to hire and retain

the best people has never been more pressing. Canada's aging population means that 20 percent of its workforce will be retiring in the next five years. "PI has proven a vital tool in succession planning too," says Halpert. "By using it with existing employees we can ensure not only that they are in jobs where they can truly shine, but that we develop them in line with future needs."

So, what exactly is "personality" and how do you test it? Personality is determined by traits which explain why an individual behaves in characteristic ways. Traits are relatively stable over time, are partly inherited and genetically determined and can be described and measured accurately. Importantly, in relation to hiring, personality traits have a direct and substantial impact on job performance. In fact, PI Worldwide research indicates that between 20 to 25 percent of an employee's effectiveness on the job is attributable to personality.

Personality assessment tools have actually been around for quite some time. Decades ago corporations used them mainly to identify the characteristics of their hardest workers to replicate them through hiring or emulation. Today's more refined tests focus on understanding employees better and determining what motivates them. The PI measures traits such as extroversion, dominance, patience and formality by asking individuals to describe themselves both as they see themselves and as the way others see them by checking off a list of adjectives. A software program then calculates and analyses the results.

Increasingly, businesses of all sizes and in all industries are recognizing personality tests as powerful people management tools. In fact, The Aberdeen Group, in a 2009 study showed 61 percent of the better-managed companies were using at least one type of personality assessment, such as reference checks, intelligence tests or personality tests – and often more than three.

Personality tests can also help optimize mentoring opportunities and create more effective teams. Team building is now a key area for implementing PI at TBRHSC, but

one that came as rather a surprise. "Initially, our primary driver for a more objective assessment tool was hiring," says Halpert. "But when we parlayed that into better understanding our existing employees, another set of opportunities opened up to us."

TBRHSC's strong culture of teamwork to get things done is demonstrated by the existence of its Great Organizational Team – or GO Team. This internal consulting group works to transform good teams into great teams and uses PI to help them do this. "Each team member completes the test and results are discussed openly," says Halpert. "It provides valuable insight into what makes each individual tick and enables better understanding within the team as to how to bring out the best in each other." The GO Team's work was recognized by an award for innovation at the 2008 Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo, in Toronto.

As 2010 unfolds, the pressure remains for healthcare organizations to find new ways to make more informed staffing decisions, reduce risk and get the most from their most important asset – their people. Clearly, personality tests have a lot to offer. It's up to the organization to consider their various applications in light of priorities. A good start is to ask "Where do we need to be in five years and how best can my people help us get there?" Then ask yourself if you can really afford not to bring the personality test along with you, as you embark on your journey.

Predictive Success Corporation

Web link: baumpub.com/HC1083

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